PRESS RELEASE

Danone Waters optimises handling on the loading platforms at its EVIAN® plant

January 15, 2018, Sant'Antonino, Switzerland. Danone Waters has opted to make handling pallets of Evian water on platforms —before they are loaded onto trains— safer and more streamlined, using Interroll heavy-duty gravity conveyors.

At the Publier site in the Haute-Savoie department of France's Amphion-les-Bains region, the largest natural mineral water bottling plant in the world has had a makeover! This historic Danone site spans 130,000 square meters. At the end of the line, the largest privately-owned railway station in France manages 65 percent of production, with the rest loaded onto the many trucks lined up in front of the plant. Every day, seven million bottles are shipped on the equivalent of 7,000 pallets. It takes robust and well-oiled logistics to maintain this pace. No malfunction can be allowed to interrupt this constant flow.

A simple solution to a complex problem

At the end of the production line, automated guided vehicles (AGVs) transport pallets weighing up to 1,200 kg to the railway loading platforms. These ultra-modern AGVs can move two pallets at once. This is where Interroll's solution comes into play. Accurate to the nearest millimeter, the AGVs place the pallets of water bottles onto heavy-duty gravity conveyors. Sixteen lanes, holding up to 27 pallets, can easily handle the pace. The gravity lanes direct the pallets to the forklift trucks which pick these up four by four to be loaded onto waiting trains. Despite its apparent simplicity, this solution boasts advanced technologies and Interroll's extensive expertise. Firstly, to ensure the safety of the installation, operators and goods, Interroll's MSC 80 Magnetic Speed Control rollers maintain a constant pallet speed of 0.3 meters per second. At the end of the line, and for enhanced operator safety and comfort, a mechanical separation solution enables four pallets to be picked up simultaneously for efficient loading.

A flexible, cost-effective and green solution

Preparing for this project required Interroll to operate its testing zone in La Roche-sur-Yon at full capacity. In fact, EVIAN® uses no fewer than 12 different types of pallets for its global markets. The Interroll solution was technically assessed using a series of tests (e.g., the speed of the idler rollers, the number of brake rollers required, the position of the separators); Interroll's expertise also enabled the company to work with pallet manufacturers to optimize pallet construction and design, to ensure that the pallets rolled optimally on Interroll's heavy-duty gravity conveyor solution.

The fact that the design of the conveyor solution uses gravity means that the installation does not need to be powered. Apart from a few wear parts, it is also impressively maintenance-free. The operating costs for EVIAN® are almost zero. Interroll's gravity conveyors generate no carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions, which is important for a site which in 2017 became Danone's first carbon-neutral site.

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Everything is flowing smoothly — naturally

One year after commissioning, and after a few adjustments, Interroll's solution has already been tested by some 520,000 pallets. Danone Waters and EVIAN® in particular now appreciate the simplicity and flexibility of Interroll's application in a very high-tech environment subject to very demanding industrial working conditions. The gravity pallet conveyor — which may have seemed rather rustic at first glance — ultimately provided EVIAN® with a cost-effective and long-term solution for the future development of the brand!

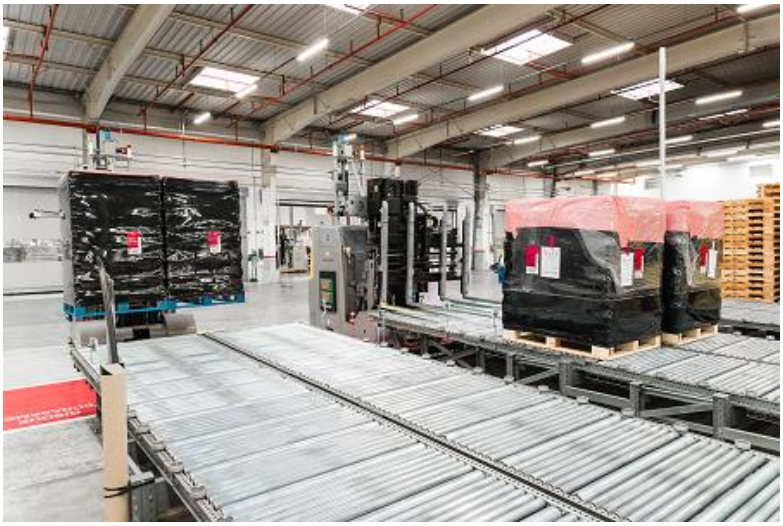

Photo 1: AGVs place pallets two by two on Interroll's heavy-duty gravity conveyors.

Photo 2: Interroll's heavy-duty gravity conveyors

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Interroll Profile
The Interroll Group is the leading global provider of material handling solutions. The company was founded in 1959 and has been listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange since 1997. Interroll provides system integrators and OEMs with a wide range of platform-based products and services in these categories: Rollers (conveyor rollers), Drives (motors and drives for conveyor systems), Conveyors & Sorters as well as Pallet & Carton Flow (flow storage systems). Interroll solutions are in operation in express and postal services, e-commerce, airports, the food and beverage industry, fashion, and automotive sectors, and many other manufacturing industries. Among the company's end users are leading brands such as Amazon, Bosch, Coca-Cola, DHL, Nestlé, Procter & Gamble, Siemens, Walmart and Zalando. Headquartered in Switzerland, Interroll has a global network of 32 companies with turnover of around CHF 401.5 million and 2,000 employees (2016).

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